

Validity of the name *Dama roberti* Breda & Lister, 2013, a small European Pleistocene deer, and the status of *Cervus polignacus* Robert, 1829 and *Cervus roberti* Pomel, 1853

Adrian M. Lister

Natural History Museum, London SW7 5BD, U.K. (e-mail: a.lister@nhm.ac.uk)

Marzia Breda

Department of Human Studies, University of Ferrara, Corso Ercole 1° D'Este, 32, Ferrara 44100, Italy (e-mail: marziabreda@hotmail.com)

Under the name *Cervus Dama polignacus*, Robert (1829) described a large deer skeleton found in Middle Pleistocene deposits in the vicinity of Soleilhac, France. He then described a second, much smaller deer skeleton found some distance away. He pointed out that it was adult and therefore fully grown, and explicitly left open the question of whether it was conspecific with the larger individual, a question that only new discoveries would resolve: 'Cette énorme différence de grandeur . . . indiquerait-elle deux espèces différentes, ou seulement deux races de la même espèce . . . ? C'est ce que de nouvelles découvertes me permettront de décider' [Does this enormous difference in size . . . indicate two different species, or merely two races of the same species . . . ? This is what new discoveries will allow me to decide']. That he intended the name *C. polignacus* to refer to the larger specimen is reinforced by his informal name for it: 'Grand Daim de Polignac'. Under Article 72.4.1 of the Code, the smaller skeleton was only doubtfully attributed to *C. polignacus* and does not constitute part of its type series; the larger skeleton is the holotype.

Pomel (1853) introduced the name *Cervus roberti* as a replacement name for *C. polignacus*. He did not mention either of the two specimens explicitly, and his brief description draws on features of both of them from Robert's (1829) account. Under Article 72.7 of the Code, *C. roberti* is a junior objective synonym of *C. polignacus* and has the same name-bearing type, i.e. the larger skeleton as established above. *C. roberti* has been used as valid by Scrope (1858), Lydekker (1885), De Stefano (1914), and Azzaroli (1953); hence it is available under Article 11.6.1 of the Code. Azzaroli (1953), followed by van der Made et al. (2015), incorrectly applied the name to the small skeleton only.

Breda & Lister (2013) named *Dama roberti*, a small species of fossil deer, with holotype a partial skeleton from the Middle Pleistocene of Pakefield (U.K.) and paratype the small skeleton from Soleilhac originally described by Robert (1829) as discussed above. A further individual of *D. roberti* from Italy was described by Breda (2015). Van der Made et al. (2015) consider that *D. roberti* could be both a synonym and a homonym of *C. roberti*. However, the holotype of the latter is the large skeleton from Soleilhac (*C. polignacus*) which is clearly a different species from *D. roberti* and hence not synonymous (Breda & Lister, 2013); and *C. roberti* was established in a different genus from *D. roberti* and they are hence not homonymous (Article 53.3 of the Code). Nor is there currently any threat of secondary homonymy because the type of *C. polignacus* and *C. roberti* is nowadays considered to pertain not to the fallow deer genus *Dama* but to the 'giant deer' *Megaceroides* Joleaud, 1914 or *Praemegaceros* Portis, 1920 (Breda et al., 2015).

Van der Made et al. (2015) suggest that these perceived problems could be resolved by considering the name *D. roberti* an inadvertent error and correcting it to *Dama robertorum*, since its authors, Breda & Lister (2013), named the species for two men named Robert (Robert Mutch, who discovered the holotype in 2003, and Félix Robert who described the paratype in 1829). However, aside from the absence of any problem of synonymy or homonymy, incorrect latinization is not considered an inadvertent error according to Article 32.5.1 of the Code. *D. robertorum* is therefore an unjustified emendation in the sense of the Code (Article 33.2). The name *D. robertorum* was unavailable at the time of the online publication, as van der Made et al.'s (2015) paper was not registered in ZooBank, though it will become available (yet invalid) as *Dama robertorum* van der Made et al., 2016 when published.

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